

particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 11-13, and 15 have been amended to clarify the subject matter contained therein and to address various concerns regarding alleged informalities. It is respectfully submitted that these claims are currently in allowable condition.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is kindly requested that the rejections of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn. Furthermore, to the extent that claims 14 and 16-21 were rejected as ultimately depending from claim 11, it is kindly requested that the rejections of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn for at least the same reasons.

II. REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 11, 13-17, AND 19 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 11, 13-17, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 2,730,744 to Vaughn (hereinafter "Vaughn") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,224,025 to Artrock (hereinafter "Artrock"). Respectfully, Applicant traverses for the following reasons.

Claim 11, from which claims 13-17 and 19 ultimately depend, relates to a floor mop comprising: two carrier plates connected to a common carrier center piece in jointed manner and which carry an absorbent mop covering, a mop handle affixed on the carrier center piece, and a wringer slide which is movable along the mop handle, the wringer slide having two rigid wringer arms, each of which is movably engagable with a back of one of the two carrier plates, wherein the mop handle is connected with the carrier center piece by way of a cardan joint, and ends of the wringer arms can each be brought into engagement with a guide surface on the back of the carrier plate assigned to them, in each instance, and the wringer slide is guided on the mop handle so that it cannot rotate.

Artrock purportedly relates to a scrubbing and polishing device including a handle 1, which is connected to a mop element 2 via a bracket 5 and a loop portion 8. (Artrock,

col. 2, lines 47-59). The loop portion 8 is disposed within a swivel cavity of the bracket 5 to accommodate swinging movement of the handle 1 in a **single plane**. (Artrock, col. 2, lines 59-62).

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness, inter alia, the prior art references must teach or suggest each and every limitation of a claim. In re Vaeck, 947 F.2d 488 (Fed. Cir. 1991). The Office Action asserts that Vaughn discloses all the features of claim 11, except for the cardan joint. (Office Action, page 3). However, the Office Action also asserts that Artrock discloses a universal joint, and that it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the Vaughn mop with the joint of Artrock (i.e., the loop portion 8 and the bracket 5) to increase maneuverability of the mop.

Respectfully, however, the suggested combination of Vaughn and Artrock does not teach or suggest the "cardan joint," as recited in claim 11. As explicitly stated in the Specification, a cardan joint prevents rotation of the center piece, while simultaneously permitting the center piece to pivot "**to all sides**." In sharp contrast, the joint of Artrock (i.e., the loop portion 8 and the bracket 5) permits the mop element 2 to swing **only through a single plane**. In this regard, it is respectfully submitted that the Office Action's characterization of the Artrock joint as "universal" is clearly mis-descriptive of the Artrock joint's very limited pivoting ability -- the limiting pivoting ability of the joint necessarily preventing its characterization as a "cardan joint."

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 11 and dependent claims 13-17 and 19, which ultimately depend from claim 11, are allowable over Vaughn and Artrock, whether these references are considered individually or in combination. Accordingly, it is kindly requested that the rejections of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

III. NEW CLAIMS 22-30

Claims 22-30 have been added herein. It is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of these claims is adequately supported throughout the Specification and that these claims are allowable over the cited references for essentially the same reasons discussed above with respect to the obviousness rejections of claim 11-21.

IV. CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is new, non-obvious, and useful. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of pending claims 11-30 are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 11-13, 15, 18, 20, and 21 have been amended without prejudice as follows:

11. (Amended) A floor mop comprising: two carrier plates connected to a common carrier center piece in jointed manner and which carry an absorbent mop covering, a mop handle affixed on the carrier center piece, and a wringer slide which is movable along the mop handle, the wringer slide having two rigid wringer arms, each of which is movably engagable [connected] with a [the] back of one of the two carrier plates, wherein the mop handle (1) is connected with the carrier center piece (3) by way of a cardan joint (2), and ends (11a) of the wringer arms (11) can each be brought into engagement with a guide surface (17) on the back of the carrier plate (5) assigned to them, in each instance, and the wringer slide (9) is guided on the mop handle (1) so that it cannot rotate.

12. (Amended) The floor mop according to Claim 11, wherein the two carrier plates (5) are moved into an [their] extended position by a spring device (18).

13. (Amended) The floor mop according to Claim 11, wherein the guide surface (17) of each carrier plate (5) rises to an elevation (17b) that projects upwards from the back of the carrier plate (5), in a direction towards a [the] free plate end (5a).

15. (Amended) The floor mop according to Claim 11, wherein an [the] end (11a) of each wringer arm (11) carries a rotating roller element (12, 15, 20).

18. (Amended) [The floor mop according to Claim 15,] A floor mop comprising: two carrier plates connected to a common carrier center piece in jointed manner and which carry an absorbent mop covering, a mop handle affixed on the carrier center piece, and a wringer slide which is movable along the mop handle, the wringer slide having two rigid wringer arms, each of which is movably engagable with a back of one of the two carrier plates, wherein the mop handle (1) is connected with the carrier center piece (3) by way of a cardan joint (2), and ends (11a) of the wringer arms (11) can each be brought into engagement with a guide surface (17) on the back of the carrier plate (5) assigned to them, in each instance, and the wringer slide (9) is guided on the mop handle (1) so that it cannot rotate, wherein the end (11a) of each wringer arm (11) carries a rotating roller element (12, 15, 20), and wherein the roller element is a wheel (20) provided with recesses (19) on its circumference, which engages with at least one projection (21, 22) on the back of the carrier plate (5).

20. (Amended) [The floor mop according to Claim 15,] A floor mop comprising: two carrier plates connected to a common carrier center piece in jointed manner and which carry an absorbent mop covering, a mop handle affixed on the carrier center piece, and a wringer slide which is movable along the mop handle, the wringer slide having two rigid wringer arms, each of which is movably engagable with a back of one of the two carrier plates, wherein the mop handle (1) is connected with the carrier center piece (3) by way of a cardan joint (2), and ends (11a) of the wringer arms (11) can each be brought into engagement with a guide surface (17) on the back of the carrier plate (5) assigned to them, in each instance, and the wringer slide (9) is guided on the mop handle (1) so that it cannot rotate, wherein the end (11a) of each wringer arm (11) carries a rotating roller element (12, 15, 20), and wherein the guide surface (17) has a flat longitudinal groove (17a) with a concave cross-section.

21. (Amended) [The floor mop according to Claim 19,] A floor mop comprising: two carrier plates connected to a common carrier center piece in jointed manner and which carry an absorbent mop covering, a mop handle affixed on the carrier center piece, and a wringer slide which is movable along the mop handle, the wringer slide having two rigid wringer arms, each of which is movably engagable with a back of one of the two carrier plates, wherein the mop handle (1) is connected with the carrier center piece (3) by way of a cardan joint (2), and ends (11a) of the wringer arms (11) can each be brought into engagement with a guide surface (17) on the back of the carrier plate (5) assigned to them, in each instance, and the wringer slide (9) is guided on the mop handle (1) so that it cannot rotate, wherein the end (11a) of each wringer arm (11) has a pressure surface (16) with a convex curvature, and wherein the guide surface (17) has a flat longitudinal groove (17a) with a concave cross-section.